

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 4486

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, PINR, PINS, AO, SF

SUBJECT: ANGOLA: SOUTH AFRICAN APPROACH TO FRENCH

REF: STATE 275289

1. FRENCH COUNSELOR HOMO CALLED ON DCM TODAY TO COMPARE NOTES ON NATURE OF SEPARATE APPROACHES MADE BY PRIME MINISTER VORSTER TO FRENCH AND US AMBASSADORS NOV 14, SPECIFICALLY TO CONFIRM THAT APPROACH TO FRENCH WAS IN FACT MORE DETAILED THAT APPROACH TO US. MAIN POINT OF DIFFERENCE CONCERNED SUBJECT OF SOVIET NAVAL PRESENCE AND SUGGESTION THAT FRENCH AND AMERICAN SHIPS SHOULD PATROL THE ANGOLAN COASTAL AREA.

2. HOMO SAID IT WAS FOREIGN MINISTER MULLER, NOT VORSTER HIMSELF, WHO SAID SOMETHING ABOUT SOVIET SHIPS PATROLLING THE AREA (HOMO WAS NOT SURE THAT WORD WARSHIPS WAS USED) AND ASKED WHY THE FRENCH AND AMERICAN NAVAL FORCES DID NOT DO THE SAME. DCM CONFIRMED THAT SUBJECT OF NAVAL FORCES HAD NOT REPEAT NOT BEEN RAISED AT ALL WITH AMBASSADOR BOWDLER, THAT VORSTER HAD CONFINED HIMSELF TO EXPRESSING CONCERN AT INFLOW OF SOVIET ARMS AND CUBAN SOLDIERS AND FEAR THAT CLOSING OF BRAZZAVILLE AIRPORT
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MEANT THAT SOVIET MIGS KNOWN TO BE THERE MIGHT BECOME

"OPERATIONAL." VORSTER HAD NOT ASKED FOR ANY KIND OF ACTION OR RESPONSE, ONLY THAT AMB CONVEY HIS VIEWS RE SERIOUSNESS OF SITUATION TO USG.

3. HOMO SAID CLOSING OF BRAZZAVILLE AIRPORT AND POTENTIAL USE OF AIRCRAFT WERE ALSO MENTIONED IN TALK TO FRENCH AMBASSADOR. REGARDING AIRPORT CLOSURE, HE ADDED THAT FRENCH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MAN WHO HAD BEEN WORKING ALONGSIDE SOVIET TECHNICIANS AT BRAZZAVILLE AIRPORT HAD SUDDENLY BEEN SENT AWAY FOR TWO WEEKS' HOLIDAY WHILE SOVIET TECHNICIANS REMAINED. HE SAID FRENCH WERE AWARE OF SOVIET MATERIAL ARRIVING BY AIR FROM USSR VIA ALGERIA AND GUINEA TO BRAZZAVILLE, BUT OTHER THAN MUCH EARLIER REPORTS OF DELIVERIES BY SHIP TO LUANDA HE WAS NOT AWARE OF ANY SOVIET NAVAL FORCES IN AREA. REGARDING MIGS BECOMING "OPERATIONAL, " HOMO THOUGHT THIS COULD REFER TO NECESSITY OF THEIR BEING ASSEMBLED, WHICH HE THOUGH COULD TAKE SOME TIME, IN THIS CONNECTION, HE SAID FRENCH WERE SOMEWHAT WORRIED ABOUT POSSIBILITY THAT SAG MIGHT CONTEMPLATE USE OF FRENCH-SUPPLIED MIRAGES IN ANGOLA--" TO STRAFE LUANDA OR SOMETHING"-- BUT RESPONDED NEGATIVELY WHEN ASKED WHETHER THERE WAS ANY EVIDENCE SAG MIGHT IN FACT BE CONTEMPLATING SUCH USE.

4. HOMO DID NOT MENTION SAG APPROACH TO FRENCH MILITARY ATTACHE, NOR DID HE ASK ABOUT REPORTED PRESENCE OF SOUTH AFRICAN FORCES IN ANGOLA.

5. HOMO HAD ALREADY BRIEFED BRITISH MINISTER SUMMERHAYES ABOUT SAG APPROACH TO HIS AMBASSADOR, INCLUDING FACT THAT AMBASSADOR BOLDLER HAD ALSO BEEN CALLED IN. (SUMMERHAYES SUBSEQUENTLY CALLED TO CONFIRM THIS WITH DCM WHO PROVIDED GENERAL BACKGROUND AS IN PARA 2 ABOVE.) HOMO AND SUMMERHAYES BOTH SPECULATED THAT REASON SAG HAD NOT SO FAR MADE SIMILAR APPROACH TO BRITISH AMBASSADOR (WHO WAS OUT OF TOWN AT TIME) MIGHT BE BECAUSE OF RELATIVELY RECENT SA-UK DIFFICULTIES OVER TERMINATION OF SIMONSTOWN AGREEMENT.
BOWDLER

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